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ABSTRACT

A study conducted by Derald Sue and Barbara Kirk in 1972 of Chinese-American students attending the University of California at Berkeley (UCB) is compared with a study and observations of Chinese-American students attending Merritt College. The Sue-Kirk study administered the School and College Ability Test (SCAT), the Strong Vocational Interest Blank, and the Omnibus Personality Inventory to entering freshman in 1966 and selected 236 Chinese-American students' results to determine their abilities and traits and compared them to the whole entering freshman group. The Chinese-American students at Merritt College were found to be comparable on SCAT scores to the UCB group but at a much lower mean; the tendency revealed by the Sue-Kirk study of higher quantitative skills than verbal ones was supported by the Merritt study. Two populations considered by the Merritt study that were excluded by the Sue-Kirk study were recently arrived immigrant/alien residents, and Chinese non-immigrant students. The study considers English Language Placement Test scores of these students in relation to their SCAT scores, and makes observations on the interest and motivation of these three groups of Chinese-American and Chinese students in relation to the findings of the Sue-Kirk study. (MB)

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SOME CONSIDERATIONS OF SUE-KIRK STUDY ON CHINESE-AMERICANS
AND ITS APPLICATIONS TO MERRITT COLLEGE'S CHINESE POPULATION

by Jack B. Irvine

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SOME CONSIDERATIONS OF SUE-KIRK STUDY ON CHINESE-AMERICANS
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The bay area is a major U.S. opening to the Pacific basin consequently it is a highly cosmopolitan habitat. The Chinese have been a large segment in this region and much can be learned about them especially as they take advantage of the higher education settings. Derald Sue and Barbara Kirk (1972) presented very interesting data and profiles of this group on the University of California Berkeley campus. I would like to present tentative data substantiating some of their conclusions, modifying some, particularly as applied to the immigrant and foreign student populations, a segment Sue and Kirk ignored, at the community college level. This information may suggest some counseling approaches appropriate for this group.

The Sue-Kirk study administered SCAT, The Strong Vocational Interest Blank and the Omnibus Personality Inventory (OPI) to the 1966 entering freshman class and selected 236 Chinese-Americans' results to determine their abilities and traits and compared them to the whole entering freshman group. "This group exhibited greater quantitative than verbal skills; they tended to express interests in and choose majors predominately in the physical science and engineering fields - interests which tend to be more technical and applied than theoretical. They tend to avoid social sciences and verbal linguistic occupations...their early immigrant parents encouraging them to choose vocations giving them the greatest economic and social mobility." In a subsequent presentation Sue and Kirk (1973) also summarized this latter point as "more interested in physical sciences, applied-technical sciences and business occupations, less interested in social sciences, aesthetic-cultural fields (underline is mine) and verbal linguistic vocations." Additionally, they state the Chinese-Americans are "more conforming, less socially extroverted, preferred concrete tangible approaches to life and experienced greater emotional

distress than other students." I would like to comment on some of these generalizations as related to Merritt College students.

Merritt College is a major feeder institution to UC but also services many Asians not going on to UC Berkeley. The Chinese-Americans are comparable on SCAT to the UC group but at a much lower mean, as one would expect -- the tendency of higher quantitative skills and lower verbal ones still holds. The following chart (figure 1) indicates the Sue-Kirk study with the additional mean for 10 females and 12 males among Merritt's Chinese-American group; this sample covers the spring quarter 1972, summer session 1973, fall semester 1973 and the recent January 1974 intake.

Figure 1.
(mean raw scores for UCB Chinese Americans)

		VERBAL	QUANTITATIVE	TOTAL
<u>Men</u>				
UC	Chinese	31.9	36.9	68.9
	others	36.7	35.1	71.8
	Merritt	21.7	27.6	47.7
<u>Female</u>				
UC	Chinese	30.0	29.2	59.2
	others	37.7	27.2	64.9
	Merritt	25.5	23.6	43.5

The data presented from Merritt through out this paper, of course, are only indicative; the N's are small and the standard deviations have not yet been worked out therefore some statements are inconclusive to a degree.

Further considerations of other Chinese at Merritt, namely the immigrant-alien resident who has recently arrived, show Merritt's oriental population to be 7% compared to Berkeley's 15% (compared to a national norm of 1%) and the

large group of recent arrivals are encouraged to take an English Language Placement Test developed on a theoretical linguistic basis and not the SCAT which all other students are urged to have completed for admission. The SCAT I is essentially a vocabulary test based on synonym recognition. The ESL test (100 items) used at Merritt has four parts: listening, grammar structure, vocabulary, and writing techniques or abilities. The vocabulary section is comparable to SCAT I except that the items are 25 instead of 50 and the synonyms are identified to a specified word used in a particular context; I will therefore double the vocabulary raw scores in order to give some comparison with the Sue-Kirk SCAT-V material. The SCAT quantitative for N=40 is matched with these English scores. (N is 53 for the total English scores which were sampled from March 1972 to January 1973 entry groups.) The following chart (figure 2) has a grouping based on SCAT-Q (Math) with a cut off at the 60th percentile. I will discuss the reason for this break shortly. There is no breakdown based on male-female here.

Figure 2. (The N of 40 is inclusive of the N of 53 in Figure 2.)
(mean scores Merritt Immigrant Chinese)

N	SCAT-Q		ESL VOCAB. SECT.		TOTAL ESL PLACEMENT (%)
	RAW SCORE	%ILE	(DOUBLED SCORE)		
	(UC SCAT-Q)		(UC SCAT-V)		
40	27.05	(33.1) 54.25	11.6	23.2	46.73
23 above 60%ile		80.04	17.7	35.4	55.78
17 below 60%ile		22.38	9.4	18.8	35.05
53	-		11.5	23.0	47.90

It is noted the English mean for the whole group and the English mean for those also completing the math section do not seem to be significant. The differences between the UC group means and the Merritt total definitely seem to be significantly

different.

These immigrant students also demonstrate that there is a point at which language may be a factor even to gaining an adequate math score. I arbitrarily cut the math scores at the 60%ile (raw score 30) as there was a noticeable break in my rankings at this point; the mean scores of those below this were at the 22.38%ile (raw score 25) in math while those above were at the 80.04%ile (raw score 36). The English performance scores both in the vocabulary test and on the whole instrument indicate corresponding wide variances: the top group at 55.74 (%) and the lower group at 35.05. The modified vocabulary score of 18.8 is rather stark against the UC groups 30.9. Such scores also indicate why the community college is playing an important role for such students with scholastic needs. I might also add that students with such low English scores (below 50) are strongly urged to attend the intensive English courses in local adult schools prior to serious admission to the community college yet they can not legally be refused admission if they insist. In such cases where the math skill is high and English very low there seems to be a degree of modest success for the highly motivated immigrant student.

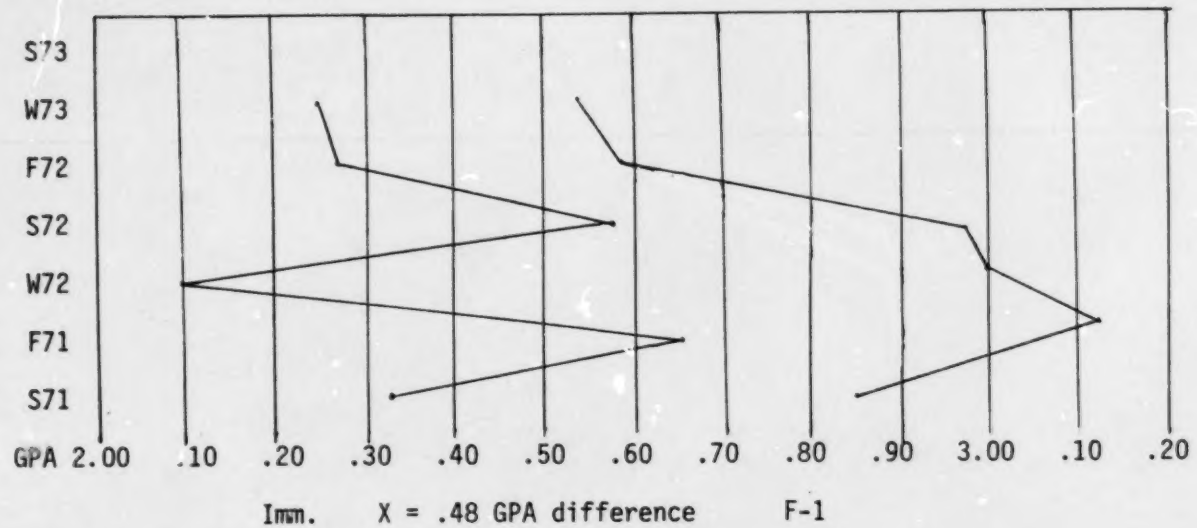
A third group which bears brief mentioning is that of the Chinese foreign student (F-1 visa) studying here as a non-immigrant. This student is carefully selected, usually from Hong Kong, has completed lower form VI in a very competitive and selective educational system, studied in the English track of the educational system - not the Chinese track - and has passed TOEFL (test of English as a Foreign Language by Educational Testing Services) with a score of more than 480/800 and more often than not above the usual university cut off of 500. These students perform very well in math and are well above our 50% cut off score on the English placement test.

Though I have not studied this group on the model set up by Sue and Kirk, I do have the following graph (figure 3) comparing gpa performances between all immigrants and F-1 visa students over a three year period; the mean difference is .48 pga or half a grade point. The Chinese foreign student constitutes 25% of this group and consistently has a gpa hovering about 3.00 (gpa for Asia and Pacific ranges between 2.90 and 3.33 since 1969). This group would probably be higher than the Chinese-American in math and higher than the immigrant in English performance.

Both the immigrant and F-1 student would bear being looked at in the 1966 UC freshman class data. Becuase UC does have a minimum admission requirement from US high school graduates, one can expect this institution's overall entering performances to be higher than the community colleges, as my data seems to indicate.

I would like now to turn attention to the less definitive area of interest and motivation mentioned earlier by my underlining. The tendency for the Chinese to be "practical" and less interested in aesthetic-cultural areas seems to be supported by a new motivational instrument developed by Harry Caughren (1972) at Merritt College. Scale I of the Merritt College Motivation Inventory (MCMI) is called Intrinsic Motivation (IM) and has 52 of the 200 items contributing to this portion of the four scale profile. The blank has been correlated to Strong OPI (1972-4). This scale (T score) has highs as being "intellectually predisposed, who are aesthetically oriented, who like academic activities, complex and theorectical situations, intrinsically rewarding contexts and who like to read and write." The low scorers are "practical persons who prefer overt action and stable situations. They do not like complicated conversations; they show a preference of working with their hands rather than their heads and feel that job security

FIGURE 3. GPA COMPARISON F-1 AND IMMIGRANT



is the most important element in any type of work; their interests are generally described as masculine. Low scorers have more of a traditional view and do not try too hard to get ahead and high scorers value independence and opportunities to perform in creative or original ways." The fourth scale of Goal Deficiency (GD) rates high scorers as anxious, worriers, somewhat self-punitive among other things and the low scorers are "self-confident, maturely goal-directed with considerable psychological maturity." The other two scales "self-enhancement" (SE) and "Person Orientation" (PO) showed evidences worthy of later consideration, particularly PO.

I have a preliminary compilation (figure 4) on a group of 37 immigrant and F-1 students. The scores are the means of the T scores of each scale. I extracted the 18 Chinese profiles from the group.

Figure 4.

MCMI Means of T Scores of Each Scale					
	N	I (IM)	II (SE)	III (PO)	IV (GD)
China	37	47	52	48	48
	18	42	53	44	50

This chart indicates a rather low scale I (almost a full standard deviation from the theoretical norm - 50) supporting the observed practical performances in the Sue-Kirk study. But a comment is in order over the term "practical". This cannot be fully understood in the "WASP" idea of the word as described in Caughren's definition of scale I. For the Chinese "practical" would include understanding the "game" of an educational system, playing it well, including many possible short cuts in order to reach the goal as quickly as possible. This would allow them to get out and to work earning

money in the shortest amount of time - also a very "practical" notion - but not necessarily working manually! These students do select engineering, business administration and, as Sue-Kirk state, physical sciences, skilled technical trades (auto shop and TV are very popular among immigrants but not welding or machine shop. F-1 students just do not take two year technical courses). The normal SE score of 53 would indicate to me that these Chinese are not as strongly pushed into fields by parents or tradition as Sue-Kirk mention in their studies; a high SE score is usually a signal that some outside pressure is upon the "self". Scale III (PO) of 44 does show a tendency toward introversion, which seems a fair assumption for the "quiet" Chinese and supported by Sue-Kirk. A high score would indicate strong people orientation as is needed among the occupations of nurses, salesmen and politicians. Sue-Kirk demonstrate via the Strong results, that these are areas most Chinese-Americans do not gravitate toward and so too probably these non-Americans. The fourth scale (GD) score is exactly on the theoretical norm yet slightly above the group norm; the N is really too small to be sure that this would be a trend toward some real anxieties as Sue-Kirk state in their conclusions but my personal experience indicates the anxiousness to be there.

Some of the above statements have correspondence in the Sue-Kirk OPI results, "Chinese-Americans appear more inhibited, conventional and less ready to express impulses (lower Impulse Expression profile). They also exhibit attitudes and behaviors characteristic of less socially extroverted people (lower Social Extroversion); they tend to be less socially concerned with other people (lower Altruism)...and were more apt to be uncomfortable and anxious (Anxiety Level)." Additionally the conservative nature of their

tradition and family life style are partially supported too by the low scale I (IM) on the MCMI.

It was noted earlier that these students do not often go into the social service areas yet an F-1 student of mine did go into sociology and recently applied to a graduate school of social work. I was hard pressed to recommend her highly for the reason that I questioned how well she would relate to people. She completed her lower division work in four quarters and a summer session. Her upper division work at UC Berkeley in academic "hoop-jumping" was nothing for her; yet my encouragement for her to go slower and work more effectively on her English was disregarded, even the requirements of courses were circuited after saying she would take them. She always felt time was short and she had to move as quickly as possible. Her heavy loads must have curtailed her ability to relate greatly to people. She came across to me as "sweet" and pleasant but always down to business. This kind of pattern may weaken the effectiveness of one wanting to work with people in social programs.

I have found that to deal somewhat effectively with Chinese of this motivation that I have had to be firm and emphatic in what they should do and follow through that they have done it. This role relates closer to the traditional family pattern from which they come and they tend to respond very positively toward you later - in the long run of the relationship - and a new warmth and openness seems to take place. Strangely enough this approach seems to develop trust, not just respect as one might presume from historical developments of Asia and the West - but genuine trust.

I find that the Sue-Kirk study clarified "feelings" I have had for a long time and the fact that the data I have been accumulating from an entirely different source seems to lend support to their findings.

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